[Supplement to the Groom Lake Desert Rat. Transcribed without permission.]

REPORT ON GROOM LAKE
ABC World News Tonight
April 19, 1994

Peter Jennings: Finally from us this evening, the road to Dreamland. And there really is such a place, though you are not supposed to know about it, and the U.S. Air Force is unhappy with us because we're going to tell you about it. The Dreamland we are talking about is actually an Air Force base in Nevada. The Russians know about it, so why not you? ABC's Jimmy Walker has the results of an ABC News investigation....

Jimmy Walker: We are one hundred miles from Las Vegas driving across the Nevada desert on public land. There is more here than meets the eye. A few feet off the dirt road, an electronic sensor is hidden in the sagebrush.

Glenn Campbell: [Radio static in background.] The base control has relayed to the patrols that someone has crossed one of their sensors. That's us.

Walker: So they now know...

Campbell: They know we're here. They'll be here in about ten minutes.

Walker: Sure enough, minutes later, a white Jeep goes by. Someone is very interested in who visits this particular piece of scrub. That someone is the U.S. Air Force. A helicopter flies out to investigate us. It comes from Groom Lake, one of the most closely guarded military facilities in the country.

The secret air base which some people call Dreamland or others Watertown or still others Area 51 is located about twelve miles over in that direction. It's clearly visible but the government won't acknowledge that it even exists. And to photograph it would violate the Espionage Act.

Military historians say the U-2 spy plane was tested at Groom Lake. More recently, the Stealth fighter. But the base does not appear on any map, and for the record, the Pentagon will only say that Groom Lake is part of the vast Nellis Range complex.

Enter Glenn Campbell and Peter Merlin, members of a group that believes the Air Force has too many secrets and not enough accountability. Armed with lawn chairs and binoculars, they set up shop on public land overlooking the air base. And they're driving the Air Force crazy.

Peter Merlin: There's some large hangers. One is quite enormous. And a control tower....

Walker: As a result of the prying eyes, the Air Force is trying to expropriate this hilltop and an adjoining one to add to the 4700 square miles it already controls, saying it's needed for safety reasons.

Campbell: There was the suggestion that people sitting on this ridge like we are doing might be hit by aircraft.

Walker: The pending land grab has turned the hilltops into a tourist attraction, drawing even more attention to the base. Last month at a federal hearing in Las Vegas, officials got an earful.

Angry Citizen at Hearing: The place is big enough already. How much expansion do they need? That place is safe. It's stupid.

Another Citizen at Hearing: There have already been allegations that environmental crimes have been committed there. Now you're asking for 4000 more acres to hide behind.

Walker: What's more, buy this model plane kit [Testor's "Thunder Dart"] and you get with it [on the] directions this 1988 photograph of the base taken by a Soviet satellite. The pentagon says it's okay to show you this picture.

Campbell: The only people this base is being kept secret from are the American people, the people who pay for it.

Walker: Our story took an unexpected turn as we prepared to leave. We spotted a Sheriff's car heading our way.

Deputy (at driver's window): We're investigating the possibility of a criminal offense.

Walker: And what would that criminal offense be?

Deputy: Sir, may I see your driver's license, please.

Walker: They believed we were photographing the facility. They were wrong. We were detained, questioned and searched. Our camera, audio equipment and some video tapes were confiscated. The Air Force held the gear for five days before returning it. No charges were filed against us.

And every work day, a fleet of privately owned unmarked airliners shuttle more than 1500 workers from Las Vegas to the base that doesn't exist.

Campbell (looking through binoculars): Yup, secret base out there. Sure enough. Same secret base as yesterday.

Walker: James Walker, ABC News, Lincoln County, Nevada.

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